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Parliamentary Human Rights Group

MEMORANDUM ON RECENT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN EAST TIMOR

1. SELF DETERMINATION

The basic human right violated by Indonesia's occupation of East Timor is the right to self-determination. All forms of resistance to Indonesian integration, whether armed or peaceful, are repressed by the forces of occupation, which has led to persistent violations of human rights.

2. RECENT EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN

Concern about human rights violations has recently been expressed by:

Pope John Paul II:
On the occasion of accepting credentials from a new Indonesian Ambassador in July 1984, Pope John Paul II said: "It is the ardent wish of the Holy See that all the rights of individuals be respected and that every effort be made to lighten the sufferings of the (Timorese) people".

Mgr. Belo, Head of the Catholic Church in East Timor
In a letter in February 1984 to his predecessor, Mgr. da Costa Lopez, Mgr. Belo spoke about disappearances, numerous arrests, trials in court of doubtful impartiality, and said that in many places the population is coralled and suffers "illnesses, hunger, lack of liberty and persecution".

In July 1984, he said in a press interview: "We live under oppression. The Timorese want peace and liberty, but at present the whole of East Timor is like prison".

Amnesty International to the UN Fourth Committee in August 1984
Torture: "The Indonesian authorities have not taken steps to countermand standing policies which condone torture and extrajudicial killings."

Arbitrary killings: "Several mutually independent sources (have) alleged that as many as 200 persons in the village of Kraras, Viqueque, were killed by Indonesian troops soon after the killing of 16 Indonesian soldiers on August 8, 1983."
"Amnesty has received information that approximately 100 men living in the vicinity of the village of Hauba near Bobonaro in the west of the territory were taken into custody and killed by Indonesian troops in March 1984."

"Disappearances" and executions: "Amnesty understands several hundred persons have been arrested in East Timor since August 1983, particularly in the areas of Dili, Baucau and Viqueque. A substantial number of these persons are reported to have simply 'disappeared'. The organisation fears, on the basis of its own inquiries, that some of those persons were executed after being taken into custody or died as a result of torture."

Trials: "In the past year, the Indonesian authorities have also brought to trial a number of East Timorese charged with offences of a political nature. However, in view of reports indicating that Indonesian forces in East Timor have continued to operate outside the framework of the law and of information casting doubt on the fairness and impartiality of the trial proceedings themselves, Amnesty International does not regard this development as marking

a significant change in the human rights situation in the territory."

Exclusion of outside observers: "Amnesty regretted the refusal of the (Indonesian) government to grant access to international trial observers (including Amnesty)."

3. DENIAL OF ACCESS

a) The International Committee of the Red Cross, denied the facilities necessary to make an assessment of relief needs throughout the territory in July 1983 (just before Indonesia launched a new offensive), had no alternative but to abandon its comprehensive programme of relief. Since then ICRC has only been able to run a food and medical programme for prisoners on Atauro Island, handle a limited family reunion programme and conduct prison visits on three occasions during 1984.

At a press conference in Geneva on 10 January, the ICRC President, Mr. Alexandre Hay, mentioned East Timor as one of the few countries where there is a serious military in which it is unable to conduct relief work to help the victims.

b) Foreign journalists are also denied access. A Reuters interview on 17 December 1984 with Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief, General Benny Murdani, reported as follows:

> 'Foreign correspondents who have applied for permits to visit the province recently have been turned down.' Asked why, he replied: "We are jittery with journalists."

c) A letter to US Secretary of State, George Shultz, signed by 123 members of the House of Representatives on the occasion of his visit to Indonesia in July 1984, was in particular concerned with the fact that:

> "the Indonesian military continues to seal off East Timor from contact with independent journalist and international church and human rights groups. It has been a source of frustration to many international observers over the years that it has been so hard to get the facts about East Timor."

4. LATEST INFORMATION ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

a) The population of East Timor was forced down from the mountains by intense bombing between 1977-79 and coralled into resettlement areas designated by the occupation authorities. The people are now to be resettled again, into villages which the Indonesian authorities call "guided villages as resistance bases" (desa binaan pangkal perlawanan). In other words, they are strategic hamlets established as part of the Army's counter-insurgency operations. It was announced in Jakarta in November 1984 that there would be altogether 400 such villages.

b) As they were in 1981 since the 1983 offensive began, unarmed East Timorese have been forcibly conscripted to take part in military operations. According to letters received by refugees in Australia, they are forced to march ahead of Indonesian patrols and in some cases are shot from behind by Indonesian troops.

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